

Post-Conference Report

## **Embrace Diversity: Free to Be Me**

October 17, 2017

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### **Introduction**

**Rainbow District School Board hosted the 9th symposium aimed at creating and enhancing school-based supports for students who are lesbian, gay, transgender, bisexual, two spirited and questioning (LGTBQ2S+) as well as students with friends and family members who are allies.**

**The Embrace Diversity: Free To Be Me Conference took place on Tuesday, October 17, 2017 at the Lexington Hotel in Sudbury. Over 400 students attended.**

**The event began with a keynote address from Brock McGillis of Sudbury, Ontario. McGillis is quickly becoming an influential advocate for the LGBTQ2S+ community. He speaks at schools, businesses, and conferences and provides inclusivity training for companies. McGillis wrote an article for, and participated in a number of Facebook lives for Yahoo. His story has been highlighted in newspapers and blogs across North America, and was most recently featured on CBC The National. While there are still barriers to identifying as part of the LGBTQ+, Brock McGillis is working to break them down.**

**Throughout the day, students chose from a variety of workshops including: Art, Yoga, How to be an Ally, Personal Stories, Resilience, Healthy Sexuality, and Law and Your Rights.**

**[CTV News Story](#)**

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## Schedule

**9:30 - 10:00am** - Arrival/Registration

**10:00 - 10:10am** - Welcome and Land Acknowledgement

**10:10 - 11:00am**- Keynote

**11:00 - 12:00pm** - Workshop Session 1

**12:00 - 12:45pm** - Lunch

**12:45 - 1:45pm** - Workshop Session 2

**2:00 - 2:30pm**: Roundtable Discussion

**2:30 - 5:30pm**: Dinner/Dance

## Workshops:

**Brock McGillis; \*info to be added:** Keynote presentation on what it was like to be the first openly gay OHL hockey player

**Sarah Corner and Jennifer Boyle; \*info to be added:** Ran two workshops on creating LGBTQ2S+ art, including pins, flags, and other wearable pieces to show their pride

**Laura Stanyon; \*info to be added:** Ran two workshops to teach students yoga and how to connect their mind and body to serve their overall physical and mental health

**Jackie Bellany; \*info to be added:** Presented two workshops on allyship and how everyday deeds impacted the lives of their LGBTQ2S+ friends and families

**Vincent Bolt TG Innerelves; \*info to be added:** Ran two workshops titled "Here I Am! The Story of How I Became Fabulous" on their personal story of being an out trans-person in their community.

**Amanda Myerson; \*info to be added:** Ran two workshops on ancient queer history, from the Pharaohs to the Greeks and more

**Tracey Odenkirk, Public Health Nurse; \*info to be added:** Ran two workshops on thriving in life and how to keep control of the things you can in life

**Nadine-Renee Conlon, Public Health Nurse and Debie Digby, Public Health Nurse; \*info to be added:** Ran two workshops on sexual health and wellbeing

**Carrie-Lynn Hotson and Anna Barsanti; \*info to be added:** Ran two workshops on the laws and rights surrounding the LGBTQ2S+ community and the resources available to them



## Quotes of the Day

*"I want them all to...be themselves."*

*"I'm happy that I came out because I feel good about myself. I'm happier..."*

*"I want them to know I'm there for them."*

*"The words we use can be very hurtful at times."*



*"I loved this workshop!"*

*"I'm so glad this is here for us. I feel like I belong."*